

The Classical Chinese Poetry Reading May be the Last Do-do Bird in Tamkang U.

英文電子報

In an Intercollegiate Classical Chinese Poems Recitation and Creation Tournament, the Chinese Department of TKU has scored a victory by winning the 4th and 5th places, but they also experienced a sense of loss for having presented a recitation dancing number called “The Catamite”, a homoerotic poem.

23 colleges and universities have dispatched their teams to participate in the Chinese Classical Poetry Chanting Contest on Dec. 16 at Soochow U. Mr. Chang Shao-chih, a senior majoring in Chinese won the 4th place for his creative work “Written in the Rain”, a chi-lu in terms of the rhyme scheme and pattern of poetry. He was outnumbered by a total of more than 600 contestants. Nevertheless, he won.

The runner-up is Mr. Pu Yi-nan, a graduate student in the 4th year of Chinese Studies. He landed at the 5th place.

The controversy, as we have mentioned before, came from the recitation of a dancing poetic number, “The Catamite”. The homoerotic theme was acted out by Emperor Han Wen Ti and his catamite, a man and a boy, in other words, behind a gauze curtain, in the accompaniment of a chanted poem. The audience cheered and booed they also screamed. Some liked it hot some was turned off because they thought the dancing number was “indecent” and “irrelevant”.

Mr. Chang Fu-chun in charge of the whole event noted that in order to stress the theatrical effect, he has used the controversial theme, plus some folklore music such as the “Huang Mei” tune. He also admitted he may have overstretched his ideas a bit too far.

There is a trend of diminished interest in classical Chinese poetry recitation in Tamkang, Mr. Chang thus revealed to us. The sensational performance of “The Catamite” may be viewed as a warning to people that this may be the last performance you ever see, and after that, no more poetry readings in TKU.